

Job 24:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.

Analysis

Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned—Job employs natural imagery to describe judgment's certainty. In ancient Near Eastern climate, snow-melt from mountain peaks (Lebanon, Hermon) provided crucial water; yet drought (tsiyah, תִּצְיָה) and heat (chom, חָם) evaporate these waters swiftly. Similarly, Sheol (שְׁאָול, the grave/underworld) inevitably consumes sinners.

The verb "consume" (gazal, גָּזַל) means to seize, snatch away, or plunder—Sheol actively takes sinners like drought steals moisture. This reflects Hebrew understanding of death as an active, personified power (compare Hosea 13:14, "O grave, I will be thy destruction"). The phrase "those which have sinned" (chata'u, חָטָאָו) uses the common Hebrew root for missing the mark or transgressing. Job affirms orthodox theology: sinners ultimately face death. Yet his complaint remains—why the delay?

Historical Context

Sheol in Old Testament thought was the shadowy realm of the dead, neither heaven nor hell in Christian terms, but a place of darkness and silence (Psalm 88:10-12). Job's generation lacked clear revelation about resurrection and final judgment, making earthly justice crucial. The imagery of snow waters reflects Palestinian geography where winter snows on mountain peaks melt in summer heat.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the certainty of death ('the grave consumes those which have sinned') affect how you live today?
2. What comfort does Christ's victory over death and the grave (1 Corinthians 15:55, 'O death, where is thy sting?') provide beyond Job's Old Testament hope?
3. Why is delayed judgment often more merciful than immediate retribution (see 2 Peter 3:9)?

Interlinear Text

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|----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------|-------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------|--------|
| שָׁא | וְלָ | שָׁ | לָגָ | מִתְמִ | יְגַל | וְ | גָּם | וְ | חֵם | וְ | צִיְהָ |
| drought | H1571 | and heat | H2527 | consume | H1497 | waters | H4325 | the snow | H7950 | so doth the grave | H7585 |

׃צִיְהָ

those which have sinned

H2398

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 49:14 (Parallel theme): Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

Job 21:13 (Parallel theme): They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

Luke 16:22 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

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